



## **Emerging Manager Monthly, April 2009**

**StreetSavvy Marketer<sup>sm</sup>**

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### ***April Mailbag***

**Q: I know you take a dim view of blogs, but are there business benefits to blogging? And are there blogs that you do like? In short, should I blog?**

A: You're right, I'm not a big fan of most blogs, but not because they don't have a place in the marketing mix. It's because so many blogs are often so poorly written and self-serving, that I suspect anyone with an IQ greater than 75 would find them offensive.

The first question you need to ask yourself if you are thinking about blogging is whether you really have something worth sharing. Who are you trying to reach and what do you hope to accomplish? How often will you write, what will you write about, and will you be able to keep up with it? You may find the first few blogs are fun and the next 50 a real chore, if not impossible. And then, before you know it, you're either not getting them posted regularly or you're writing drivel just to get it done.

Assuming you have something to say and can make the time commitment, there are actually a number of genuine business benefits to posting blogs if they are well-written, informative and provocative, and present viewpoints that may not be offered elsewhere.

You can use your blog to build a following, attract prospects to your Web site, help move your website up in the search engine rankings (some 90% of Web site traffic is driven by search engines) as well as showcase your expertise.

A good blog will also allow you to engage your target markets more directly than, say, a PR initiative might. Instead of relying on a reporter's editorial judgment, you can communicate directly to the people who are most responsible for your business success. Blogs are also considerably cheaper than advertising and can go a long way toward helping you build and differentiate your brand.

So should you blog? Maybe. At the very least, you should have a blogging strategy so you know what your clients, competitors and others are saying about you.

As for blogs that I like, that's a tough one. With the Financial Times, Wall Street Journal, The New York Times and a tsunami of trades competing for my time, I don't spend a lot of time surfing the net. But there

are a handful of blogs I sometimes visit, if for no other reason than I think it's important to look at issues through both ends of the telescope even if I might not agree with a particular blogger's post.

These include [www.robertreich.blogspot.com](http://www.robertreich.blogspot.com); [blog.stephentmcclellan.com](http://blog.stephentmcclellan.com); [dealbook.blogs.nytimes.com](http://dealbook.blogs.nytimes.com); and [blogs.wsj.com/marketbeat](http://blogs.wsj.com/marketbeat). [If you're especially impressed with a blog that you may have seen, send me its web address and we'll post it here so everyone can see it.]

**Q: I get the feeling that I'm somehow offending reporters when I call them. These are calls to reporters with whom I've previously spoken and otherwise had a cordial relationship. Aside from avoiding reporters when there's a full moon, are there specific do's and don'ts that I should be aware of?**

A: Funny you should ask. It seems there is actually a Web site dedicated to reporters' peeves—"The Angry Journalist" ([www.angryjournalist.com](http://www.angryjournalist.com)). Who knew?

Now you no longer have to count the ways, real or imagined, that you can offend a reporter. All you have to do is scan through a few thousand anonymous rants to see exactly what reporters don't like. Here's an example from Angry Journalist #275: "Contacts (that) do not call back!"

Or how about this post from Angry Journalist #1616: "Stupid, stupid, stupid public relations practitioners who send me things that clearly demonstrate that they have no clue what I do, that they NEVER read my publication, and they have no clue what their clients do...."

But there is hope for we mere mortals. Angry Journalist #2360 had this to say about dealing with publicists, but it certainly applies to anyone dealing with reporters [editor's note: for space the list has been cut from 10 to 6, but check out the site for the rest]: "It's a smart PR person who reads this site. So, for them, here's what makes me angry about publicists...."

1. Follow-up calls and e-mails. I know why they do it, but I ignore them. I got your pitch; if I want to do something on it, I will contact you.
2. Pitching the exact thing I said I didn't want...
3. Paying no attention to specifics I said I needed...
4. Mailed or phoned pitches. I keep computer files – organized files of e-mail pitches that interest me. Mail and phone calls almost never get any attention.
5. Random press releases that actually fly in the face of what my publication tries to do.
6. Accusations that I don't know how to frame a story. If you have an alternate take, great! But no need to come at me in attack stance.

What I love:

1. Publicists who always seem happy, friendly, grateful, respectful, excited, etc.

2. Those who follow the instructions in my query, even if they don't understand why they need to.
3. Those who wait to hear from me rather than bug me – and then respond quickly.
4. Those who contact their client for me...” So, there you go. There speaks a wise man (or woman) and now none of us has an excuse for abusing a journalist! [A final tip: Never call a reporter on deadline.]

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